



Kansas State University Libraries
New Prairie Press

Symphony in the Flint Hills Field Journal

2012 – The Prairie: Its Seasons and Rhythms
(Laurie J. Hamilton, Editor)

The Wiser Barn

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/sfh>

Recommended Citation

(2012). "The Wiser Barn," *Symphony in the Flint Hills Field Journal*. <https://newprairiepress.org/sfh/2012/stories/6>

To order hard copies of the Field Journals, go to shop.symphonyintheflinthills.org.

The Field Journals are made possible in part with funding from the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation.

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences at New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Symphony in the Flint Hills Field Journal by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact cad@k-state.edu.

THE WISER BARN

Only six miles northeast of this year's concert site, the Wiser Barn sits in southern Wabaunsee County. Ellen Coffman, the owner of the barn and a portion of the former Wiser Ranch, recently spent time with Michael Stubbs, Historical Research Editor of the Field Journal, to share her knowledge of this wonderful building. Sadly, the aged barn has collapsed and will soon disappear from the landscape, but the photograph and story provide documentation that will keep the memory alive.

Ellen allowed Michael to scan items from her scrapbook and answered many of his questions about the history of the barn. She had in her possession the only known photograph of the barn when it still had its grand windmill. Written on the windmill is the name of Dion Geraldine, an engineer who later was the General Superintendent for the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. An impressive lithograph of the barn and ranch appeared in the Everts 1887 Official Atlas of Kansas.

J. P. Wiser was a wealthy man who seemed to spare no expense. Another one-of-a-kind document in Ellen's scrapbook was the elaborately printed invitation to the gala barbecue celebrating the completion of the barn in October 1884 with dinner in the barn, field sports, a "barbecue," and then dancing in the barn to music provided by Hick's Orchestra. Michael discovered that the invitations were printed by the same firm that printed the invitation to President Grover Cleveland's inauguration the following March 1885.



WISER BARN
Courtesy Ellen Coffman



LITHOGRAPH OF WISER BARN AND RANCH
Everts 1887 Official Atlas of Kansas